

OFFICE OF HEALTH DISPARITIES STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2023



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH

Office of Health Disparities

INTRODUCTION

This strategic plan is a blueprint for the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Office of Health Disparities (OHD) and reflects our commitment to build upon past successes while moving forward with our mission to advance health equity and reduce health disparities in Utah.

This plan supports state and federal public health priorities and aligns with:

- Utah Legislative Mandate for the Office of Health Disparities
- Governor's One Utah Roadmap
- Utah Department of Health mission and vision
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (ELC/OT) health equity priorities¹
- Office of Minority Health, State Partnership Initiative (SPI)²
- Healthy People 2030³

OHD'S GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Health equity is the fundamental principle in our commitment to reduce and, ultimately, eliminate health disparities by addressing its determinants. The pursuit of health equity requires work to obtain the highest possible standard of health for all people with special attention to the needs of those communities at greatest risk for health disparities.

Health disparities are differences in health outcomes closely linked to economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and geographic disadvantage.

OHD MISSION

Our mission is to advance health equity and reduce health disparities in Utah.

OHD VISION

Our vision is for all people to have a fair opportunity to reach their highest health potential given that health is crucial for well-being, longevity, economic, and social mobility.

Glossary of Terms

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (ELC and OT21 grants)

2. State Partnership Initiative to Address Disparities (SPI) is a project funded by the Federal Office of Minority Health.

3. Healthy People 2030 is a set of goals and objectives with 10-year targets designed to guide national health promotion and disease prevention efforts to improve the health of all people in the United States.

HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

This plan is organized into three elements categorized at three different levels.

1. Strategy

1.A - Approach

1.A1 - Objective

1. "WHAT we are doing = The **STRATEGY**" describes the scope of the strategies implemented by OHD to address health disparities and advance health equity. Each strategy is supported by a set of approaches aimed to accomplish the strategy.

1.A - "WHY we are doing this = The **APPROACH**" explains the rationale behind each approach and its link with health equity.

1.A1 - "HOW will we accomplish it = The **OBJECTIVE**" details the specific objectives that will serve to measure progress toward each specific approach and strategy.

STRATEGIES

This strategic plan outlines four priority strategies.

1. Build internal infrastructure
2. Work across agencies
3. Foster community partnerships
4. Expand the narrative

STRATEGY 1: BUILD INTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Strengthen and align organizational infrastructure around knowledge, skills, and practices to advance health equity and address health disparities in Utah.

1.A - APPROACH: MOBILIZE DATA, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION

Data helps identify and raise awareness about the causes of health disparities and guide social and environmental interventions to improve quality of life for everyone.

Objective 1.A1 - Produce data guidance to standardize collection, analysis, evaluation, and reporting of health disparities and health equity data.

Objective 1.A2 - Produce a series of health disparities and health equity data tools and reports.

Objective 1.A3 - Conduct and report on health equity data analyses (HEDA).

Objective 1.A4 - Conduct and report on a social determinants of health population survey.

Objective 1.A5 - Align internal efforts to coordinate the collection and reporting of social determinants of health data.

1.B - APPROACH: BUILD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Education and awareness build a foundational understanding of health equity. This develops practical skills to apply this understanding across all policies, programs, practices, and interventions.

Objective 1.B1 - Develop and provide a series of trainings and tools related to health disparities and health equity in Utah to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills among UDOH employees.

Objective 1.B2 - Develop an online platform to disseminate training, presentations, and tools related to health disparities and health equity.

Objective 1.B3 - Coordinate the dissemination of training, presentations, and tools related to health disparities and health equity.

1.C - APPROACH: REFINE INTERNAL PRACTICES AND PROCESSES TO PROMOTE EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

An inclusive and diverse work culture extends beyond hiring processes and encompasses equal opportunities and treatment throughout every touchpoint of the employee experience.

Objective 1.C1 - Scan current UDOH practices and policies surrounding diversity and inclusion related activities.

Objective 1.C2 - Utilize the UDOH Health Equity Work Group to review current UDOH procedures, practices, and policies surrounding equity, diversity, and inclusion related activities and make recommendations.

Objective 1.C3 - Coordinate with UDOH leadership, other state agencies, and the governor's office to report on, adopt, and implement procedures, practices, and policies to increase and support equity, diversity, and inclusion.

1.D - APPROACH: ALIGN PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

Internal collaboration among programs optimizes resources and enhances good stewardship of public health funding.

Objective 1.D1 - Coordinate and build the capacity of the UDOH Health Equity Work Group (HEWG).

Objective 1.D2 - Provide technical assistance to and coordinate with programs, bureaus, and divisions with funded health equity-related activities.

STRATEGY 2: WORK ACROSS AGENCIES

Invest in long-term partnerships and collaborations across agencies to provide optimal services, promote efficient use of resources, reduce duplication of efforts, and build sustainability.

2.A - APPROACH: COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Each local health district has unique needs and characteristics that require localized interventions rather than a “one size fits all” approach.

Objective 2.A1 - Initiate contracts with the 13 local health departments and the Utah Association of Local Health Departments to provide health equity related programming and resources.

Objective 2.A2 - Strategize with contracted local health departments and the Utah Association of Local Health Departments about specific approaches and practices for each local health district to serve vulnerable populations, advance health equity, and reduce health disparities.

Objective 2.A3 - Provide technical assistance tailored to contracted local health departments to support internal capacity to serve vulnerable populations, advance health equity, and reduce health disparities.

Objective 2.A4 - Produce a series of tools to support and sustain technical assistance to local health departments.

2.B - APPROACH: COLLABORATE WITH INDIAN HEALTH SYSTEM OR INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE/TRIBAL/URBAN INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS

UDOH has a formal policy for engagement and collaborations with tribes and AI/AN communities in Utah; this policy is based on formal consultation and conferment. Consultation is critical in the relationship between Tribes and government agencies. Conferment is formal communications with federal agencies providing services to AI/AN populations.

Objective 2.B1 - Partner with the UDOH Office of American Indian/Alaska Native Health Affairs (OAIANHA) and Utah Indian Health Advisory Board (UIHAB) to initiate contracts and coordinate activities to provide health equity related programming and resources in order to align with UDOH policy for engagement with Tribes and AI/AN communities.

Office of American Indian/Alaska Native Health Affairs (OAIANHA) is the lead office at UDOH for engaging in consultation and conferment with Tribes, I/T/U partners and AI/AN communities. Utah Indian Health Advisory Board (UIHAB) is a critical partner in this process. UIHAB consists of representatives of the I/T/U, which guide state public health policy regarding Tribes and AI/AN communities.

2.C - APPROACH: COLLABORATE WITH HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Health care and public health should be aligned in an effort to address individual and population needs to advance health equity in a complementary way.

Objective 2.C1 - Identify and report on needs and priorities for demographic and social needs data in health care systems.

Objective 2.C2 - Produce and disseminate recommendations and products to support demographic and social needs data in health care systems.

Objective 2.C3 - Partner with the State Office of Rural Health to establish contracts to increase capacity for population health management and reduce barriers to serve vulnerable communities at independent rural hospitals.

Objective 2.C4 - Develop tools to support and provide technical assistance to health care systems to coordinate and align health equity efforts.

2.D - APPROACH: BUILD ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic collaborations with stakeholders optimize strengths in a way that aligns efforts, capacity, and resources to address health disparities and advance health equity.

Objective 2.D1 - Strengthen the role and impact of the Health Disparities Advisory Council (HDAC).⁴

4. The Health Disparities Advisory Council (HDAC) provides a formal mechanism for lawmakers, community advocates, and health professionals to give input and make recommendations to OHD and other UDOH divisions, bureaus and programs; and advocates for initiatives, projects, and policies aimed at reducing health disparities and advancing health equity in Utah.

*Objectives linked to SPI activities.

Objective 2.D2 - Coordinate activities with the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs in order to align efforts and optimize resources.

Objective 2.D3 - Coordinate with the governor's office to work across state government agencies to increase equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Objective 2.D4 - Develop cross-sector agency collaborations to advance health equity and eliminate health disparities.

Objective 2.D5 - Enhance the collaboration and coordination of activities among associations of minority health care professionals.

STRATEGY 3: FOSTER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Build trust, relationships, and a common understanding of community needs.

3.A - APPROACH: ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITIES

Meaningful community engagement builds mutual respect to foster equal partnership essential to developing comprehensive and effective approaches.

Objective 3.A1 - Engage and educate communities in processes and practices for data collection in the public health and health care sectors.

Objective 3.A2 - Increase the impact of community organizations by building capacity and developing community-led leadership and engagement for diversity and inclusion.

Objective 3.A3 - Collaborate with community leaders to develop guidance about how to effectively engage with underserved and underrepresented communities.

3.B - APPROACH: SUPPORT COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

Community health workers are trusted health equity agents who promote and improve health and quality of life by connecting with and educating individuals and communities.

Objective 3.B1 - Support community health worker workforce development and sustainability through contracts, training, and technical assistance.

Objective 3.B2 - Develop internal infrastructure to support certification of the community health worker workforce.

3.C - APPROACH: BUILD COMMUNITY ALLIANCES

Alliances and networks collectively advance health equity to increase awareness, advocate for policy change, and assure accountability.

Objective 3.C1 - Support rural and urban community-based organizations to foster alliances and capacity to serve and reach vulnerable communities through contracts, training, and technical assistance.

Objective 3.C2 - Partner and coordinate with local health departments to build or strengthen local community alliances.

3.D - APPROACH: LEARN WITH COMMUNITIES

Listen, learn, and partner with communities in ways that build their capacity to have greater control over the factors that affect their health.

Objective 3.D1 - Facilitate conversations with rural community stakeholders to improve understanding of public health systems in rural areas and needs of vulnerable populations.

Objective 3.D2 - Continue two-way communication mechanisms to improve transparency, understand community needs, and facilitate community engagement.

STRATEGY 4: EXPAND THE NARRATIVE

Expand an understanding of what creates health and the impact of the social and structural determinants of health.

4.A - APPROACH: UNDERSTAND THE ROOT CAUSES

A health equity framework helps visualize the different components of health equity to ensure a connected and balanced approach.

Objective 4.A1 - Promote the OHD health equity framework among stakeholders and communities to facilitate a common understanding about what creates health and how to address health disparities.

Objective 4.A2 - Mobilize health equity data analyses (HEDA) findings to establish a data-driven connection between the OHD health equity framework and health disparities experienced in Utah.

Objective 4.A3 - Develop and expand health equity and health disparities data portfolios.

4.B - APPROACH: DEVELOP LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT INNOVATION

A culture of continued learning, improvement, and innovation creates the conditions to think and work in a way that makes health equity efforts more efficient and meaningful for everyone.

Objective 4.B1 - Disseminate health equity organizational principles to support leadership and innovation across public health and health care systems.

Objective 4.B2 - Create blueprints to guide the development of agency or organizational plans to advance health equity and address health disparities.

Objective 4.B3 - Cultivate and support health equity champions across OHD-led boards and committees.

4.C - APPROACH: MODIFY THE CONVERSATION

A new narrative expands the understanding of what creates health and well-being and articulates the full scope of health equity.

Objective 4.C1 - Develop a communication plan and messaging about what creates health, health equity, and health equity as a pathway to quality of life, economic development, and social cohesion.

Objective 4.C2 - Leverage online platforms and social media outlets to disseminate clear and consistent messages about what creates health and health equity.

Objective 4.C3 - Utilize data to inform and develop specific messaging about the impact of inequities and health disparities in Utah.

4.D - APPROACH: BUILD A SHARED HEALTH EQUITY VISION

A common voice and collective actions provide an opportunity to make positive and sustainable change that improves quality of life and social cohesion.

Objective 4.D1 - Host Utah's first local health equity conferences to bring stakeholders together to build partnerships, problem-solve, and mobilize communities around sustainable efforts to advance health equity and address health disparities.